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ABSTRACT

Although teachers play central roles in education, traditionally, teachers have not had a major voice in educational change. The teacher is often viewed as a passive receiver of a change product or as a reactor to change. In more recent literature, however, more attention has been given to the personal nature of change and the relations between teachers' personal knowledge schemes and change. One example of paradigmatic change is illustrated by Wisconsin's family and consumer initiative to move toward the use of a critical science curriculum perspective. A study examined the nature of the curriculum change as experienced by the 120 family and consumer education teachers involved in the project. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 teachers. The major finding of the study was that, for these 10 family and consumer education teachers, curriculum change was an experience of encountering discontinuous ways of knowing. The study also showed that, in practice, teachers often based content upon a technical view of home economics. Teachers also conceptualized curriculum change in different ways. They reported an emotional as well as intellectual experience in the change process and were more positive toward change when there was more group support for the effort. Recommendations for practice included the following: (1) schools should provide systematic opportunities for sustained change; (2) structures should be created within schools that support intellectual communities; (3) teacher educators need to understand that overreliance on "canned" curriculum materials may serve to increase the paradox that teachers face between the role of the teacher and the role of curriculum developer; and (4) teacher educators need to help preservice teachers understand that curriculum development and change is more than technical concepts and procedures. (Contains 27 references.) (KC)

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Lost and Found Voices in the Process of Curriculum Change

Paper presented at the meeting of the American Vocational Association

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Although teachers play particularly central roles in education, traditionally teachers have not had a major voice in educational change (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993). The teacher has been declared the "missing voice" in educational change in that teacher's work roles and demands, purposes, and personal experiences are frequently ignored (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Sprague, 1992; Prawat, 1991; Apple & Jungck, 1993; Romanish, 1993; Kilbourn, 1991; Johnson, 1990).

One reason that teachers may be considered the missing voice in education is due to the nature of the change approach that is undertaken. Three perspectives on change seem to be important when examining the nature of curriculum change for teachers (Dwyer, Ringstaff & Sandholtz, 1990; Leithwood, Ross & Montgomery, 1982; Hord & Hall, 1987; Chin & Benne, 1969; Barth, 1988) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Perspectives on Change

Instrumental-Rational	Normative-Cultural	Personal-Transformative
• Rule-Oriented • Authority-Controlled • Change: Product or Completion of Goals • Organizational Perspective	• Attitudes, Values, Skills • Significant Relationships Among Persons • Change: Process • Organizational Perspective	• Examination of Personal Conceptions • Engaging in Dialogue • Justification and Reflection of Practice • Change: Transformation of Belief and Practice • Personal Perspective

In an instrumental-rational approach, change is rule-oriented, and usually authority controlled in a top-down structure. Change is viewed as an implemented product or the completion of prespecified goals. In this perspective, the teacher is viewed as a passive receiver of a change product or as a reactor to change. The drawback of this perspective is that when imposed it challenges a teacher's experiences, professional judgement and expertise. Imposed

change generally means there is a failure to account for teachers' beliefs, values and ideas about education or learning (Sikes, 1992).

In the second perspective, change is viewed primarily as a process which considers both personal dimensions and educational contexts. Normative or cultural change approaches focus on the attitudes, values, skills and significant relationships among persons. This focus suggests that for change to occur within the educational setting, schools must transform the underlying values that guide actions while giving attention to both leadership structures and the relationships among people (Goens & Clover, 1991). The connections among people are an important part of the change process. In both of these perspectives, change is usually viewed from an organizational context.

More recent educational literature has given attention to the personal nature of change and the relations between teachers' personal knowledge schemes and change. In this third perspective, change has more to do with the examination of personal conceptions, engaging in dialogue about these conceptions, justification and reflection of one's practice, and perhaps transformation in one's beliefs and practice (Richardson, 1990; Fedje & Copa, 1989; Porter & Brophy, 1988; Kilbourn, 1981; Farber & Armaline, 1992; Grant & Zeichner, 1984). In family and consumer education, for example, Fedje and Copa (1989) have discussed how teachers develop personal knowledge transforming in the process of considering critical science-based curriculum frameworks. The nature of such knowledge transforming experiences have not been well understood either in family and consumer sciences education or beyond.

Overview of Problem

One example of paradigmatic change is illustrated by Wisconsin's family and consumer education initiative to move toward the use of a critical science curriculum perspective (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Wisconsin Pilot School Project

Partnerships	• Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction • University of Wisconsin: Madison, Stevens Point, Stout • Local School District
Participation	• 120 Teachers (1988 -1992) • 600 Teachers (1992)
Curriculum Groups	• Family, Food and Society • Family and Jobs • Family and Technology • Family, Work and Human Development

A concentrated amount of time and effort has been spent by teachers in a pilot school project supported by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Stout and Stevens Point and local school districts. The pilot school project involved approximately 120 of Wisconsin's family and consumer education teachers over three or more years in the development and implementation of curriculum examples between 1988 and 1992 (Fauske, 1991; Hittman, 1991; Way, 1991; Fedje, 1992).

Teacher work groups were determined by interests related to practical problems of the family and level of learners to be addressed. The groups included: "Family, Food and Society," "Family & Jobs," and "Family & Technology," directed toward high school learners, and "Family,

Work and Human Development," directed toward middle school learners. In the last year of the pilot school project an additional 600 teachers were introduced to the curriculum model.

However, despite a heavy investment in curriculum development and continual professional education of teachers in the state of Wisconsin over the past decade or more, paradigmatic changes in family and consumer education did not seem to have occurred consistently statewide.

Discussions with teacher educators involved in the project, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction family and consumer education consultants, and family and consumer education teachers, suggested there are important differences in how curriculum change is perceived, and the way and degree to which curriculum change is occurring. It seems that inservice efforts had varying impacts on teachers' understandings and practices.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of the curriculum change as experienced by family and consumer education teachers involved the Wisconsin statewide effort to foster adoption of a critical science-based family and consumer education curriculum.

The overall question addressed for this study was: What is the nature of curriculum change as experienced by family and consumer education teachers? Specific questions included:

- How do teachers conceptualize contemporary family and consumer education?
- How do teachers conceptualize curriculum change and its attributes?
- How do teachers experience curriculum change?
- What facilitates or inhibits curriculum change?

Methodology

A phenomenological methodology was used to gain deeper understanding of the nature of educational change as experienced by the family and consumer education teachers who were part of the Wisconsin curriculum change effort. Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences (Van Manen, 1990). This study uses the in-depth retrospective research interview which includes presenting open-ended questions which evoke memories of events that have been lived through, and follow an unstructured format so that additional questions may be raised from the person's responses (Becker, 1992).

Sample for Study

Preferred research participants are those who have many life experiences in the phenomenon, and for that reason purposeful sampling was used to select 10 family and consumer education teachers for participation in this study. These persons were among the 120 family and consumer education teachers who had participated in the Wisconsin pilot school effort over three or more years. Another primary characteristic for selection was to identify participants from each of the teacher work groups. Other characteristics of these 10 teachers included the following: each were teaching in different regions of the state, taught in metropolitan, urban or rural areas, all were experienced educators (ranging from 13 to 29 years), many had multiple educational responsibilities in addition to teaching, such as the tech prep coordinator or gifted and talented coordinator, all had participated in continuing education (six teachers held Masters degrees) and all teachers were female.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews were conducted in the spring of 1994. Interviews ranged in length from one and ½ hours to two and ½ hours. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed. Data was analyzed case by case and across cases to begin to form a conceptual framework for categorizing teachers' shared experiences. Initial analysis was assisted with computer software The Ethnograph (Seidel, Kjolseth & Seymour, 1988).

Overview of Findings

The major finding of this study was that for these 10 family and consumer education teachers, curriculum change was an experience of encountering discontinuous ways of knowing (see Figure 3). The findings are organized by the research questions related to the following categories:

- Teachers' conceptualizations of family and consumer education (a through e)
- Teachers' conceptualizations of curriculum change and attributes (f through g).
- Curriculum change experiences of family and consumer education teachers (h through m).
- Barriers and facilitators to curriculum change (n).

Following are selected examples of each of these findings and one example of teachers' narrative descriptions in each section. Section A through E describes teachers' conceptualizations of family and consumer education. Section B foucuses on Teachers' descriptions of a family-focused curriculum sometimes reflect traditional technical concepts.

Figure 3: Overview of Findings	
How do teachers conceptualize contemporary family and consumer education?	**What are the barriers and facilitators to curriculum change?** n. Teachers experience curriculum change as a process of encountering discontinuous ways of knowing.
a. Teachers conceptualize family and consumer education using primarily concept-based frameworks.	Concept-Based & Practical Problem-Based Curriculum
b. Teachers' descriptions of family-focused curriculum sometimes reflect traditional technical concepts.	Official & Operational Language Use
c. Family-focused concepts are viewed as both central and incidental parts of the curriculum, and are sometimes not viewed as relevant at all.	Central & Incidental Use of Family-Focused Concepts
d. Curriculum is conceptualized in relation to both effectiveness of practice and justifiability of practice.	Effective & Justifiable Practice
e. Teachers hold future visions of family and consumer education that vary in clarity.	Vague/Undetermined & Clear/Urgent Visions
How do family and consumer education teachers conceptualize curriculum change and its attributes?	
f. Curriculum change involves making a connection between the official and operational curriculum	Official & Operational Curriculum
g. Curriculum change is a personally active and involving process.	Active & Non-Active Process
How do family and consumer education teachers experience curriculum change?	
h. Family and consumer education teachers experience curriculum change as a learning process.	Unconnected & Connected Learning
I. Curriculum change is viewed as a process of becoming more confident about personal knowledge.	Confidence & Tentativeness in Knowledge
j. Curriculum change is an emotional as well as intellectual experience.	Intellectual & Emotional Dimensions
k. In the school context, curriculum change is experienced as a solitary activity.	Solitary & Group Processes
l. Within the school context, formal curriculum development occurs as an occasional or sporadic process.	Sporadic & Continuous Attention to Curriculum
m. Teachers use various means to inform others about family and consumer education curriculum content.	Informing & Educating Others About Curriculum Content

The following example suggests that in actual practice, content is often based upon a more technical view of home economics. One teacher described the activities of her middle school class: ". . . They do a baking powder biscuit lab first, and cookies and cakes and then they do a big breakfast, a cooperation thing. . . .But then they're just strictly graded [on cooperation]" (Teacher 5). Another teacher described a high school adult living course. The course is described as more family-focused as it focuses on recurring societal issues. ". . . We cover everything from some basic psychology background as far as basic human needs to helping people look at 'what ought to be' "(Teacher 4).

Teachers also conceptualized curriculum change and its attributes in different ways: (g) Teachers viewed curriculum change as personally active and involving process. "I think curriculum is life. It's present needs of students, it's future needs, it's understanding the connections between different disciplines, it's helping students see the connections. It's the methods and tools I use to accomplish what I do in the classroom as far as content. Curriculum is me because I think sometimes I lead best by example, as a role model kind of thing, modeling what I am trying to get across" (Teacher 4). Another teacher shared the following about curriculum change: "I guess a lot of mine is more of a source of frustration, when it starts with I don't like the way this happening or I don't feel like the kids are getting what I want them to get in some particular area. And so I then would look at what I have, or what I might change or add or delete. . ." (Teacher 7).

Another component that was examined is how do family and consumer education teachers experience curriculum change? One particular dimension that didn't surprise me -- but is not indicated in the literature -- is (j) in that curriculum change is an emotional as well as intellectual

experience. One teacher talked about the emotional and intellectual support she felt from teachers that influenced the curriculum development process. ". . . Everyone was working and everyone was laughing! You know, someone would tell a story or someone would share, and I thought, this is where the times have changed. We used to go out of here crying and bitching, and now we're doing the same fool work, we we're doing the same thing! But we're really all working together, it's like we've got this goal, that we're really kind of all bought into it enough and we're relaxed enough with each other, that we can, you know, be stupid, and we can laugh at each other, and laugh with each other. And all of the sudden it came clear, all of a sudden, curriculum became fun. . ." (Teacher 6).

In examining the data and looking for barriers and facilitators to change, it was interesting to note that it really was the same dimensions that served as barriers and facilitators. And it seemed that (n) teachers experienced curriculum change as a process of encountering discontinuous ways of knowing. Dimensions such as concept-based and practical problem-based curriculum, or the official and operational curricula, or effective and justifiable practice, did not always "connect" immediately. For some of these 10 teachers, these discontinuities seem to serve as barriers to curriculum change. For example, the following teacher descried be the discontinuity between her roles as a curriculum developer and as a teacher within the school context. "Curriculum itself is not my favorite part of teaching, that is writing curriculum. I much more like the delivery, the students, the environment . . . A negative experience [has been] with curriculum writing itself. I do it, but there is definitely a level of me that is uncomfortable that may I'm not quit doing it right. And what would somebody else think if they saw me doing this? I don't know if you ever get over that" (Teacher 5).

Although a number of teachers seemed to experience discontinuities as barriers to curriculum change, other teachers seemed able to reconcile the discontinuities and move forward with curriculum change. Another teacher, for example, described how the emotional aspect of the work came into play in understanding new curriculum ideas. Although the experience was initially "misery," she later used that notion to further help other teachers address the intellectual and emotional aspects of educational change. She seemed to have developed a personal sense of balance between potentially contradictory dimensions of the curriculum change process. Which she described: "I think that misery was an important component because for any good relationship it's not all roses. There are points that are difficult and I guess I think that if it's difficult, then it's sweeter. And so, the whole thing kind of fit together and it was slow for me; I first made the human connections, the professional connections, that helped me make the other connections that were needed" (Teacher 9).

Recommendations for Practice and Research

The following are recommendations for practice: (1) School administrators should examine the opportunities provided to teachers. School should provide systematic opportunities for sustained change. (2) Structures should be created within schools that support intellectual communities. Duffy (1994) describes intellectual communities as places where teachers can learn to deal with the uncertainties and ambiguities of teaching. (3)Teacher educators need to understand that over reliance on "canned" curriculum materials may serve to increase the paradox that teachers face between the role of the teacher and role as curriculum developer. (4)Teacher educators need to help students develop deep conceptualizations of the official and operational curricula. Including the philosophical orientations, but also the relationship between the official

and operational curricula. (5) Teacher educators need to help pre-service teachers understand that curriculum development and change is more than technical concepts and procedures. They should help students to understand the relationship between emotional and intellectual dimensions.

Recommendations for further research include the following: (1) Further examination of gender differences related to the curriculum change process. Due to the nature of the subject matter, the participants of this study were all female. Male teachers may have similar or different experiences associated with the process of curriculum change. (2) Further examination of subject matter differences. The family-focused curriculum model is based on ill-structured problems. Experiences of teachers within disciplines that have well-structured content may be similar or different. (3) Examination of teacher changes across time in relationship to the change process and examination of how teachers do and do not address discontinuities associated with curriculum change. (4) Further examination of the learning processes used by teachers in curriculum change may be important to understanding how teachers deal with discontinuities. (5) This study found that teachers worked both in individual and group settings but didn't explore the differences between strategic and accidental ways of working and the relationship to curriculum change. (6) Further completing a member check to further establish the trustworthiness of the data by engaging teachers in discussion about the themes.

Summary

The purpose of this research has been to explore the nature of curriculum change experiences of family and consumer education teachers and has provided insights in curriculum change as a personal process.

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